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SUBJECT: DAILY IRAQI WEBSITE MONITORING - October 23, 2005

SUMMARY: Discussions of Iraqi parliamentarians' self-interest, the Arab League, the Iraqi constitution, and Saddam's first day in court were the major editorial themes of Iraqi, Arabic language websites on October 23, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS  
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- [1A.](#) "In the New Iraq . Highest Pension for Least Service" (Kitabat, 10/23)
- [1B.](#) "How Is Iraq Affected, Not Affected by the Arab League" (Al-Nahrain, 10/23)
- [1C.](#) "What Does Saleh Al-Mutlag Want" (Sawt Al-Iraq, 10/23)
- [1D.](#) "The Feeble Court" (Al-Jeeran, 10/23)

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
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[1A.](#) "In the New Iraq . Highest Pension for Least Service"  
(Editorial by Jasim Aif - Kitabat - "Writings -  
<http://www.kitabat.com/i9323.htm> )

"The National Assembly's pension law, which was enthusiastically approved by parliamentarians, has launched a debate among Iraqis. But it seems that this sarcastic debate has not reached Assembly members' ears, as they have never given any attention to Iraqis in the first place. They did not bother with Iraqi bloodshed all over Baghdad, Tal-Afar, Fallujah, Qaim, the triangle of death, and the restaurant in Basra where Falafel sandwiches taste of blood, nor did they care about hundreds of Iraqi corpses with bullet holes in their skulls floating in rivers. They have never heard the minimum estimates of the country's unemployment rate, 60%-65%, nor shown concern over widespread corruption.

"Can't they see the deterioration in services? Those who enabled them to assume their parliamentary posts, with their ink-stained fingers, cannot even find food ration items today. Are they monitoring reports that Iraqi youth must pay \$500-\$600 and provide certificates affirming their allegiance to certain sectarian parties to stand any chance of enrolling in military and security forces? What are our parliamentary representatives [doing about all these issues]? And there are so many more.

"The above-mentioned issues could not occupy the minds of the Assembly members; rather, their minds were occupied with guarantees of their personal futures, so they approved a pension proposal that grants them 80% of their current salaries-believed to be in the millions-for the shortest service in the history of the Iraqi state, thereby exceeding any known retirement system in the world. And none of us protested because according to the law, they are the 'legislators.' It seems that this pension system has captured the imagination of a local city councilmember in Basra who demanded a similar system be applied in local councils throughout Iraq. Based on sheer humanitarian concern and according to the Iraqi method of justice, we support his demands, and we would also like to include in this law, pensions for the personal security members of all Iraqi officials!"

[1B.](#) "How Is Iraq Affected, Not Affected by the Arab League?"  
(Editorial by Nejat Saad - Al-Nahrain - "The Two Rivers" -  
[http://www.nahrain.com/d/news/05/10/23/nhr102\\_3e.html](http://www.nahrain.com/d/news/05/10/23/nhr102_3e.html) )

"I do not want to get into the negative stances adopted by the Arab League towards the people of Iraq, nor do I wish to blame its Secretary General, Amr Musa, or criticize his latest visit to Iraq to hold a reconciliation conference. I want to concentrate on the role of the new Iraq in building a new Arab League with a new, civilized cultural view. After the fall of Saddam's fascist regime on April 9, 2003, we did not observe a decisive Iraqi position that would have protected the country from becoming a target of both the Arab League and Iran. The new democratic Iraq should be the one to play a vital role in changing the region's dark mentalities.

"The basic goal sought through ousting the previous regime

was to build a democratic Iraq in which human rights and interests take priority; if we go back to the Arab League's charter, we discover that concepts of democracy, human rights, and justice are nowhere to be found. We also observe that the League's culture is ancient, blaming Arabs' lack of development on imperialism, which justifies Arabs' contentedness with dictatorships that take over their lives until foreign imperialists liberate them. In addition to this, the League's mentality is possessed by 'conspiracy theories' that portray the world as having no concern other than offending overdeveloped Arab countries.

"These worn-out principles are not compatible with the new Iraq; therefore, maintaining a seat in an aging Arab League does not benefit Iraq or the League. On the contrary, both sides would be a source of discomfort for the other, with nothing in common between the two.

"Iraq and Iraqis have always been the ones to take initiative and affect those around them. The Arab League itself, which was formed over fifty years ago, had Iraq as one of its most effective founders. But the question remains, how can Iraq turn the Arab League into an entity compatible with a new democratic Iraq and with reform in the region? Iraq should seek to change certain concepts and add others to the Arab League, encouraging it to follow the lead of the EU in achieving economic integration and political and cultural harmony through democratic governments-in contrast with Arab dictatorships that favor fascism over the interests of their citizens and have achieved absolutely nothing. The role of the League should not be restricted to holding meetings and pathetic conferences; it should hold gatherings in which participation is based on the desire to build a progressive and modern structure.

"Iraq should clarify to the Arab League the importance of spreading democracy, combating terrorism, and reforming the League in all respects, regarding personal freedoms, equality, and human rights. It should establish the fact that the impediments to Arab nations cannot be summarized by imperialism alone, as Arab countries started their economic, political, and cultural deterioration once they declared independence.

"Iraqis should be the ones to take the initiative since it is the Arabs who need to be salvaged from their state of chaos. If Iraq were to succeed in reforming the Arab League, it would achieve two goals: it would not isolate itself from its surroundings, nor would it allow its Arab League neighbors to affect Iraq with its suppressive regimes."

1C. "What Does Saleh Al-Mutlag Want?"  
(Editorial by Salah Al Fadhli - Sawt Al-Iraq - "The Voice of Iraq" - <http://www.sotaliraq.com/articles-iraq/nieuws.php?id=17911> )

"Saleh Al-Mutlag, for anyone who does not know him, is the spokesperson of the National Dialogue Council in Iraq. The Council considers itself representative of Iraq's Sunnis-or the 'absentees' as they like to call themselves-who chose Saleh Al-Mutlag to be the spokesperson. When he joined the constitutional drafting committee as the Sunni Arab representative, he became the Arab Satellite Channels' star as Iraq's Sunni spokesperson.

"It is known that the fledgling Iraqi draft constitution reached a form that disputing parties could agree upon despite boycotts of parliamentary elections. But for it to be effective, it was necessary that Sunni Arabs were represented.because they are a major component of Iraq's population. Shiites and Kurds, who were the two winning groups in the elections, were flexible and offered concessions to Sunni Arabs. But Sunnis continue to have reservations about the draft constitution, which they consider the beginning of the division of Iraq.

"Despite the fact that many of their demands were met, including a chance to review all the disputed points in the next parliament, Saleh Al-Mutlag insisted on rejecting the proposed constitution and called on all supporters to reject the document. The most significant of Saleh Al-Mutlag's objections focused on two major points: rejecting federalism in regions other than Kurdistan and objection to deba'thification. Why did Al-Mutlag focus on two specific points? The answer is clear: because he knows Kurds will not drop their demand for federalism and he knows Shiites insist on including deba'thification in the constitution. It seems that opposition of this type will be detrimental and any agreement on the constitution that everyone accepts is doomed to fail.

"Al-Mutlag's group's rejection confirms that rejection is a strategic position that cannot be changed. It is obvious that 'interest in the Arab nature of Iraq and its unity' is not Saleh Al-Mutlag's motive; the main purpose is to hinder the political process and to send a message to everybody

that things cannot be accomplished without their [Sunni] satisfaction. I believe that if 'the impossible demands' are implemented to the satisfaction of Al-Mutlag's group, they will continue to insist on a position of opposition because they do not want a new system in which justice and equality will prevail.

"There is still an important question regarding whether or not Saleh Al-Mutlag and his supporters are representatives of Iraq's Sunni Arabs. Without elections through which Sunni Arabs express their opinions and identify their representatives, we cannot say that Saleh Al-Mutlag represents Sunni Arabs. It is likely that without an agreement among Sunni clergy, the Sunni Arab choice between Ba'thists and extremists and those unwilling to accept the new situation-even if the impossible were given to them-will remain absent. Time will tell you what you do not yet know."

1D. "The Feeble Court"  
(Editorial by Ali Al Kindri - Al-Jeeran - "Neighbors" -  
<http://www.aljeeran.net/viewarticle.php?id=articles-20051023-33779> )

"No one could have imagined that the first session of Saddam Hussein's trial would be such a farce, as if Saddam himself arranged it. We cannot believe that these very weak capabilities are the capabilities of Iraqi people, considering all his [Saddam's] educated people, judges, and engineers. We do not have a justification for what we, and millions around the world, watched-waiting for what was termed 'the trial of the century' to turn out to be this farcical, feeble image.

"The courtroom was not supplied or equipped technologically for the trial of the century. The audio was not clear; the sound was of poor quality; and there was an echo that affce the bad sound. Is this Iraqi rsourcflnes?

"Asie from th technology,we saw that the judge was substandard; he participated in chaos by continuously laughing for no reason-failing to be serious and strict. He allowed Saddam to say what he wanted and disrespect the court without reprimand from the judge, who wanted to be nice and well-mannered at the expense of the court's reputation, the sanctity of the judiciary system, and respect for the law. What happened made everyone who watched the first session wonder, 'Is this the standard of Iraq's judiciary system? Couldn't they find a stricter, more experienced, and more serious judge? How did the judge allow the accused twice, thrice and then four times to talk without permission and make noise in the court-in the trial of the century?'

"Is there not a smarter, more experienced general prosecutor in Iraq than the one the world watched? How did this general prosecutor allow the tyrant lawyer to interrupt him during his presentation? As for Saddam, he used the judge's weakness and refused to state his name and identity, and the judge did not stop him; instead, he let Saddam continue and question the judge's integrity and impartiality, and the judge did not take measures against him. At the start of the session, he said to the judge: 'Who are you and who do you represent?' He did not stand in court respectfully like other defendants.

"As we said at the beginning, we cannot find a justification for the farce of the century. We cannot accept that this is the standard of Iraq, Iraqi civilization, Iraq of Hammurabi. Al-Ja'fari's government is responsible for this farce, with respect to preparation, technology, and judge and general prosecutor selection. The justification that 'Iraq is passing through exceptional conditions' will not suffice, nor will it absolve Al-Ja'fari and his government of the abuse to Iraq and Iraqi people in front of the world. The Iraqi National Assembly should challenge Al-Ja'fari to fully prepare for the next session in order to convey a civilized image of Iraq to the world, rather than the farce we watched on October 19th, 2005."

SATTERFIELD